



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0432CA-1 for Lindsay Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a complete and comprehensive reform vision that builds on the four core education assurances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace</li> <li>2) building a data system for student growth, information for teachers and principals to drive instruction</li> <li>3) recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers. However, the LEA does state that currently these are weaknesses within the district, but they address the weaknesses as part of the reform plan that will be implemented with the grant monies</li> <li>4) turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant has adopted the CCSS and the creation of the "Life Long Learning Standards". The applicant has also recently adopted the Guaranteed Viable Curriculum" (GVC) for those schools who are the least successful. They have also recently restructured the entire district, consolidating schools in order to provide the most viable service to students and parents.</li> </ol> <p>Applicant has given their implementation reform plan the name EMPOWER (Engaging and Motivating Personalized Learning Opportunities with Exceptional Results) making personalized learning opportunities a focus of the reform model.</p> <p>The applicant presents a vision that articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student learning. They have a plan for support that it is grounded in performance based learning which encompasses common and individual tasks that are based on ability and interests. The vision is very ambitious and requires the dedication of all teachers, administrators, and students, but if everyone is dedicated to the vision it is achievable. The plan is based of the researched based strategies of Marazono and is important to the comprehensive and coherent plan. The vision does support the high quality plan that is presented in the application, and seems to be accepted by all.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant has provided a comprehensive description of the process the applicant used to select the schools in the LEA. They chose all schools within the LEA spanning grades k-12 because they intend for the creation of personal learning system - EMPOWER to be accessible to every teacher, and every student within the district. They provided the poverty rates and other figures to support the LEA's collective ability to meet the requirements.</p> <p>The applicant provided a list of schools along with the total number of students being serviced by the grant and the teachers affected. They have met the requirements.</p> <p>JJ Cairns stands out among the schools chosen to participate in this grant cycle - overlapping of grade spans and the number of students. The impact of not having specific information regarding the school leaves uncertainty and needed clarity regarding more specialized interventions for these students.</p> <p>The applicants approach to implementing its reform proposal is clear and supports the vision that supports a their high quality plan.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a high-quality plan that describes how they intend to create a plan that will be sustainable and</p>		

scaled up to be translated into meaningful reform that can be used in other districts outside of the participating district. They propose to do this by creating a "reculturing as the key driver of the change - changing the paradigm in the classroom, the school, the system, and the community." They have 6 elements noted to complete this task: 1)a shared vision, 2) time for stakeholders to reflect on the change, 3) professional development for teachers to understand the new delivery models, 4) leaders who are highly effective and forward thinking, 5)student motivation, ownership, leadership and responsibility for their learning, 6) continuous improvement cycles that create a climate of ongoing innovation. The applicant provides a viable logical model of the theory of change they are presenting for the focus of the grant and the LEA's plan to improve student learning outcomes for all students who will be served. The applicant's plan supports the vision of the LEA and is ambitious and achievable.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicants goals are very ambitious!

The applicant provides a commitment to its vision of Personalized Mastery Learning for all students where the "pace of instruction is based on learning, not how much content must be covered."

The applicant has provided goals that are ambitious for the following areas: performance on summative assessments, decreasing the achievement gaps, and the graduation rates, and college enrollment. Applicant has goals that are achievable in all areas with the exception of Students with disabilities. They have the ambitious goal of closing all gaps to 5% by one year after the grant cycle. This would mean the Students with disabilities gap would require much more intensive interventions due to the base line gap being at 34.5%.

The applicant provides support for the reform plan that is clear and credible. They have supporting details that will allow the goals of accelerating student achievement, student learning, and increasing student performance and success through a personalized learning environment. The vision supports a high quality plan.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of advancing student learning and teaching by providing details regarding the implementation of the performance based system in the 9th grade in 2007. They have seen increases in scores on state assessments from students who were included in the initial pilots of performance based systems. One example was in ELA where the proficiency levels have moved from 21% proficiency to 42% proficiency. The applicant does not address graduation trend data which is a requirement under subsection a. This has an important impact on LEA's ability to provide a clear record of success over the past four years. They have worked closely with the Marazono Foundation to bring about "district-wide systemic and systematic change to schools who are low performing." The applicant's plan encompasses all schools which are considered to be PLA. Applicant is very transparent, noting their weaknesses in the system for making performance data available to students, educators, and parents and they have expressed their plans to use grant monies in order to improve upon this particular issue. However, since this criteria is based on the evidence of the extent in which they make the performance data available presently this is a weakness in the LEAs ability to currently make data available. Noting the weaknesses and plans to correct the weaknesses along with the evidence that is strong, provides support for accomplishing the vision and supports a high-quality plan that is ambitious and achievable.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant currently does not offer a high level of transparency due to the infrastructure of their systems. They have addressed this issue in the plan and have presented a coherent plan that will "make available for view by the community at large.. the processes, practices, and educational investments related to the program as well as student assessment and project progress data." As part of the EMPOWER plan the district is "committed to the concept of operating an effective, efficient, and transparent program."

The applicant currently makes available the personnel expenditures at the school level and non-personnel expenditures at the school level for instructional purposes, but is limited on the information break down within these categories. This is a weakness in the LEAs ability to meet the high level of transparency that is needed to support the criteria for B(2).

The applicant is transparent with the weaknesses and knows they need to enhance thier transparency, and they have a plan in place to do so with the funding if recieved.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant has successful demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State statutory requirements by providing the actual legislation codes from the California Education Code Sections. Section 35160 states that "any school district may initiate and carry on any program, activity, or may otherwise act in a manner which is not in conflict....with the purpose in which the school districts are established." The applicant has not presented any feature of the reform plan that will in any way be bound due to the regulatory requirements set out by the state in order to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. The applicant has provided support for the vision that is clear nad credible for accelerating student achievement and increasing personalized learning based on interest and ability.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented a description of how students, teachers, and families were given a survey as their "participation" in preparing the application for the RTT-District grant. However, the stakeholders have been given multiple opportunities to evaluate and add feedback for refinement regarding the focus of the grant - Performance Based Systems. The LEA has a "strong working relationship with the local teacher's union" and has their support provided they can "negotiate and agree" upon modifications to the collective bargaining agreement. The applicant provides overwhelming response from stakeholders within the application.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing the personalized learning environments. The applicant is transparent with their weaknesses, but has provided a plan for correcting the weaknesses using the grant monies. They divided their goals/gaps into four categories: 1) Curriculum refinement and alignment, 2) Access to data systems, 3) Greater access to technology and integration, and 4) Ability to scale up and sustain the PBS system. Each category is very specific and lists the gaps, the solution, and the time frame in which it will be addressed during the grant cycle.</p>		

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students with the support to graduate and be ready to pursue rigorous study and accelerate according to need. The applicant provides an approach to learning that engages and empowers learners. Students will understand that what they need to learn is key to success through the use of the performance based system and the Life Long Learning Standards the students are introduced to as early as kindergarten. As noted in the reform plan, "student engagement, motivation, ownership, leadership and responsibility" is an essential ingredient of the LEA's strategic plan. This leads to the students ability to identify and pursue learning and development goals that are structured toward their ability. In the PBS model "time in the classroom is replaced by the mastery of content." As noted in the plan, technology will be used in order to allow students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of interest for the student through project based learning. The same technology will allow for access and exposure to diverse cultures that will deepen student learning. Teachers will provide "a variety of instructional approaches" to meet the needs of the individual students. Students will be placed in the</p>		

correct "personalized sequence of instruction" based on their performance on initial assessments to ensure correct learning levels. "Access to high quality, advanced learning for anytime learning will be expanded through project EMPOWER." Applicant has a plan to address the weaknesses in their digital learning content that is available and accessible by expanding the "GPS" system called Educate. Through Educate each learner will have a digital learning plan (DLP). The applicant provides an example of what a typical learning day for a student in the upper grades would look like, addressing the parent's point of view and the child's. This demonstrates the applicant's ability to see how their plan and vision will impact students in their schools. The applicant has provided a plan that addresses a high quality plan for preparing students to be college and career ready, however the applicant needs to address the learning plans for special education students as they are required to have added interventions, accommodations, and modifications. This is important to meeting the criteria for accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students.

The applicant has provided a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college and career ready.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is commended for noting that their plan requires "dramatic changes to the role of a teacher in a student-centered, personalized mastery learning system." The applicant has created a partnership with Fresno State University to develop a residency program that will prepare not only the LEA's teachers but other teachers in the key components on implementing a performance based system. Through the grant, project EMPOWER will support the effective implementation of performance based education. Under the plan each teacher will have a "written professional development plan based on the individual teacher's need" in order to ensure they have the necessary tools to provide high-quality content to all students at all levels. To ensure that theory translates into practice, "on-site and virtual coaching will be provided to teachers." The LEA will hire two curriculum specialist to ensure that teachers have experts at their disposal on curriculum; they will hire six teachers on special assignment to be the driving force for sustainability as they move to the Digital Learning Platform. These new hires will be experts in integration of technology and personal learning environments. The LEA has addressed that these hires will be charged with "building capacity" within the permanent staff to ensure the changes remain in effect after the grant cycle. The applicant has provided sufficient and ambitious evidence that supports the criteria that all participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams and communities that will support their individual and collective capacity. Through project EMPOWER, personalized mastery learning will require real-time access to meaningful data that will drive instruction on a daily basis. The LEA has addressed teacher and principal evaluations as "teachers not yet considered highly effective, teachers in hard-to-staff subjects...will receive ongoing professional development and support in order to become highly effective while working with cohort groups and with highly effective teachers." More information to support the fidelity of use in the systems currently in place and how they plan to monitor and adjust the fidelity as the program continues is needed to support component C(2)a:iv and C(2)d because of the importance that fidelity plays in the implementation of a Performance Based Learning System vs a Carnegie system.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a high-quality plan that details the districts organizational structure that will support and services to the participating schools. They have created a District Leadership Team (DLT) for the central office and select members from throughout the LEA. At each building there are School Leadership Teams (SLT) that are composed of members of the administration and faculty. They are building their teams based on Total Leaders 2.0 by Schwahn and Spady. The district has stated in the vision that "a commitment to school autonomy will enable each SLT to best address the needs of its particular learning community." LEAs are allowed flexibility in adjusting schedules and re-arranging learning areas in order to facilitate the PBS system. Students are allowed to move within the curriculum based on their needs, their abilities, and their interests. The applicant provides examples for several populations, but does not provide a specific example for those students who require special accommodations to the content and expectations. This is an important piece to closing the achievement gap of special education students from 34.5% to 5% over the next four years.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides a comprehensive plan for ensuring that all participants have access to material and digital learning regardless of income by providing a plan to expand their mobile devices for students. The applicant has already created a partnership with Verizon that has created the entire district (including the community) with free wireless hotspots. The applicant is transparent about the weaknesses in infrastructure or technology systems within the district, in order to ensure that everyone has access to all data, but has created a comprehensive plan to address those weaknesses through the grant. The applicant will also use the grant funds to build a system that is interoperable with current systems in order to house and share teacher data, student data, budget data, and instructional data.

A crucial part of this plan is the idea that learning can and will take place "anytime and anywhere", however there is no mention of extended tech support for stakeholders that goes beyond the typical school day.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant will create an Evaluation Leadership Team (ELT) that will meet weekly in the first year of the grant cycle and quarterly through years 2-4. This team will evaluate progress of the grant and will provide progress monitoring reports to all stakeholders twice a year. They will also have an external evaluator to evaluate the progress. The applicant does not fully address how they will proceed with changes if the ELT deems changes are needed. This is important to the viability of change that is needed toward the ongoing extent of the plans for implementation.</p> <p>The plan contains a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process by creating the ELT. The ELT will be comprised of the Superintendent, District Director of Research and Evaluation, External Evaluator, representatives from all buildings. This team is an essential part of the implementation of the plan. The district representatives will hold webinars and face-to-face interviews twice yearly to provide all stakeholders with the progress of the programs and to address the quality of investments such as professional development, technology, and staff.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a high-quality plan that will allow for funds to support the publication of district findings, implementation of programs, and transparency in funding during the project. They also publish the "lessons learned" during the implementation of performance based systems so that other districts will learn from their mistakes. Through the publications and meetings with stakeholders, the applicant provides opportunities for stakeholders to become engaged in the program itself.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant has provided a plan that has ambitious yet achievable performance measures for all students and subgroups. The applicant has provided details in the rationale for choosing the measures, how they will provide rigorous, and formative and summative data to ensure the implementation success of the plan. Their rationale for choosing the measures provide rigorous, timely, and formative information that includes both formative and summative measures to provide adequate data; this data will allow for the implementation of the proposed project by the applicant to be successful.</p> <p>The applicant addresses how it plans to review and monitor the measures throughout the plan and notes that changes will be ongoing for the measures including the introduction of Smarter Balanced Assessment during the cycle of the grant. The applicant will use both qualitative and quantitative measures that are timely, appropriate, and logical for the proposed project's implementation.</p> <p>The applicant does not address how it will review and improve the measures over time if any are deemed insufficient to gauge implementation progress which is a vital piece to ensuring that the applicant has provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures that are in support of the overall plan.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides details regarding oversight including formative assessments of the programs as well as summative assessments of the programs. "The evaluation of project EMPOWER will examine the implementation, effectiveness, and periodic progress, and assist in the process of making data-driven decisions for program modification and improvement." The applicant will use quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions on the adjustments to the plan during the span of the grant cycle.

The applicant provides a plan that is sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD funded investments. The applicant provides measures that are appropriate for evaluation purposes. This supports the ability of the LEA to evaluate the effectiveness of the Race to the Top- District funded activities.

-Applicant will use formative and summative data to "provide feedback through 1) collection and analysis of information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate replication 2)periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes 3)data collection and analysis of student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

-Applicant will use quantitative data such as student achievement data, technology audit, attendance, truancy, discipline, graduation rates, drop-out rates and qualitative data such as focus groups, anecdotal evidence to support the implementation of the plan.

The applicant has provided sufficient evidence to support plans that will evaluate the effectiveness of RTTT-D funded activities including professional development, technology, productive use of time, money, staff and resources in order to see improved results toward the goals of the plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget includes both narrative and charts to allow for consistency and flow. The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project including general fund and revenue where it is mentioned in the budget that other funds will be used to supplement and "support the district's overall budget because it will be implemented at every staff level and at every school, for every subject." The applicant has noted they will use other funds as seen in the above mentioned quote, but they do not provide the specific funding sources and amounts that are tied to these budget line items. The applicant did not provide detail on the one-time investments that will allow for "building capacity" to ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. The missing pieces in the budget impact the overall budget plan in the reasonability and sufficiency to support the budget plan.</p> <p>- The applicant provides narrative that supports their efforts to move forward "budgeting for staff to move the project forward, they have budgeted for significant investment in the training of ALL teachers and administrators." This is a strength within the budget.</p> <p>- The applicant has address their technology weaknesses by funding "The Digital Learning Platforms" that are the basis for implementing and maintaining the Performance Based System throughout the district.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Applicant provides their goals of the project as their way of ensuring sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant (Focused vision, effective leadership, efficient organizational structure, strong partnerships, and secure funding).</p> <p>- Applicant has provided a high-quality plan that is fully aligned to their desired outcomes. The focused vision has moved from a time-based traditional classroom model to a personalized learning environment that will meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>- Applicant has provided a high-quality plan that is aligned to desired outcomes by addressing effective leadership. The plan supports effective leadership by providing extensive professional development to leaders in order to change management styles and turn their focus on student learning and continuous improvement.</p> <p>- Applicant has provided a high-quality plan that is aligned to the overall outcomes of the projects four core areas and provides some description of sustainability through efficient organizational structure.</p>		

- Applicant has provided a high-quality plan that has strong partnerships through the competitive preference component, but also has formed partnership beyond that competitive preference component with several other community organizations.
- Applicant has provided details and rationale for the hiring of teachers, technicians, and specialists that will be used during the life of the grant. They have addressed how they will be phased out and no longer needed after the four years. Therefore, they have met the requirement for providing rationale for their budgets sustainability and proposal.
- Since the majority of the applicant's plan centers on "building capacity," the ability of the LEA to have financial sustainability throughout the life of the grant and also after the grant is seen in the budget and the sustainability of the budget.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides a description of a several different partnerships, but focuses on the REAP foundation as the key competitive preference priority for this application. The Rural Education for Americans Project (REAP) supports the social-emotional needs of youth in the district. REAP's mission is presented and correlates with the intent and purpose of the application. Eligible students within the district can earn up to \$45,000 dollars towards college by meeting criteria based on the performance based system as well as other criteria such as community awareness. Mentoring is a key element, and REAP has provided a full-time counselor at the district's high school.

The applicant has identified 10 population-level desired results for students participating in the grant. The applicant has a clear plan on how they will track the data, but does not fully explain how they will use the data to target resources to improve results as this is important to the viability and continuous change expected in the ongoing life of the plan and grant cycle.

The applicant has addressed its plan to scale up the model for districts who are not part of the grant and will be working with the Marazono Foundation to create a district that will be able to serve as a model for the performance based system.

The applicant has some details regarding the ability to "build capacity" through accessing the needs and for students, parents, and teachers; identifying and inventorying the needs and assets of the community and if the goals are aligned, creating a decision-making process and infrastructure to support the desired results, their ability to engage parents and family in the decision-making, and routinely addressing the progress in implementing the plan in order to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

Overall the plan is ambitious, logical, and achievable. The plan is comprehensive in nature and provides opportunities for parents, teachers, students, and community members to become engaged with one another so that together they can provide solutions to issues involving student and the plans implementation of time. The partnership allows for the integration of education with social services including the family unit.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is very transparent with the weaknesses found in the organization. They have created a coherent and comprehensive plan to build upon the core educational assurances that will lead to the creation of learning environments that are designed to improve teaching and learning through personalization regarding need and ability to ensure that all students will have success in all grade levels including high school and beyond.

--The applicant presents a vision that articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student learning. They have a plan for support that it is grounded in performance based learning which encompasses common and individual tasks that are based on ability and interests. The vision is very ambitious and requires the dedication of all teachers, administrators, and students, but if everyone is dedicated to the vision it is achievable. The vision does support the high quality plan that is presented in the

application.

--Applicant is very transparent about thier system for making performance data available to students, educators, and parents and they have expressed their plans to use grant monies in order to improve upon this particular issue.

--The applicant is transparent regarding their infrastructure or technology systems within the district, in order to ensure that everyone has access to all data, but has created a comprehensive plan to address those weaknesses through the grant. The applicant will also use the grant funds to build a system that is interoperable with current systems in order to house and share teacher data, student data, budget data, and instructional

Total	210	193
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0432CA-2 for Lindsay Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The vision presented in the narrative that "the district's Personalized Mastery Learning Platform will be sustained and replicable in other districts through the use of the Learner and Facilitator Digital Learning Platform" shows strengths in a number of ways:

The vision is clear, addresses the urgent and unique needs of the community, and is built on the four core educational assurance areas. The district's foundational ideas for making dramatic changes in the processes of teaching and learning are commitment to personalized mastery learning, competency-based rigor, transparent accountability, and student ownership of their education. The district goal for this grant is to fully develop and implement system-wide a learner-centered, performance-based system.

The district's vision is made more credible by its work over the past several years on developing a research-based personalized learning system. The proposal's approach is logical and specifically laid out in its high-quality plan. Beginning with hiring, laying out the scope of work, and determining professional development needs, the plan continues by developing curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment with technology to support the work of educators.

This vision is a clear, credible, and achievable approach to its reform goals due to its internal consistency, practical plan, and research-based approach.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
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#### (A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district's approach to implementing the reforms will certainly support high-level implementation of their plan. The district involved all community and school stakeholders in assessing the district's strengths and needs. Their comprehensive model for reform includes:

- A guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Assessment system
- Student-centered instructional model



- Learning support and technology
- Learning accountability system
- Capacity-building through shared leadership and professional development, and
- Continuous improvement with planned sustainability.

In order to have tangible results and sustainable change, the district will include all schools and all students in the proposal. Each of their eight schools (6 K-8 and 2 high school) serves high need students. Of their 4,074 students, 3,126 are low-income, and 100% qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Sixty-seven percent of students perform below grade level in ELA, and 64% perform below grade level in math. Only 38% of the adults in the community have a high school education. In this insular community, one can function successfully in society outside of school without knowing how to speak any English.

All 169 educators in the district are participating educators.

This selection of participants is very appropriate in the light of the extensive and similar needs of the students in all of the schools. Due to the strength of this applicant's plan, if the proposal had not included all students and educators from all schools, those who were not included could be left even farther behind. The only risk presented by including all students in the district is that there is no comparison group. The benefits of including all schools outweighs this risk.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has an achievable, effective, high-quality plan that promises to not only transform education in all the district schools, but also to provide a framework with products and support that will be scalable to other districts. The plan's theory of change stems from three research-based concepts:

- Successful systemic reform requires changing more than one factor at a time
- Successful reforms must have ambitious standards, strong connection between what is specified in the standards and what is measured in the assessments, readily and publicly available student progress data, and capacity-building embedded in educators' daily work
- Successful reform is adapted to the context by local stakeholders and must be adaptable

The district will scale up its reform efforts within and beyond the district through professional development offerings to other districts. It will also make available its student and educator Digital Learning Platforms to enable other educational systems in the country to succeed in the change process toward personalized mastery learning. The Facilitator DLP model does not currently exist, but it will be developed during the grant period. The Facilitator DLP enables strategic design development, provides exemplars for training modules and manuals, permits progress monitoring, and holds data for continuous improvement. The district hopes this platform will set the industry standard for professional development to achieve systemic change.

The applicant's high quality plan refers to the development of the Facilitator DLP as the grant activities progress. Much of the grant work detailed in the plan involves creating content, procedures, manuals, and continuous improvement structures in the DLP, and it is highly likely that the district will be able to complete this project during the grant, so it will be ready for scale-up at the end.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It is highly likely that the applicant's vision will result in improved student learning and increased equity of access to highly effective teachers. However, student performance results in math for all students and in ELA and math for ELL students are very low across all grades, and it will be challenging to equip teachers to enable students to meet the very ambitious goals for improvements in these areas. Proficiency percentages are in the single digits, for example, in math and ELA at the high school levels. It may be unreasonable to expect the district to meet the achievement goals set for the end of the grant period, even though the prospect is good that there will be improved student learning.

Because the students in the district are mainly Hispanic, there is not a significant gap between Hispanics and the overall performance for all students. It is possible, with individualized learning, for high school graduation rates to approach the 95% goal from its current 75%, but it seems unlikely that the goal of 85% college enrollment from the current 47% could happen in 4 or 5 years.

Given the proposed high-quality plan, with its broad stakeholder input, versus the educational challenges in the district, this plan is likely to make a significant improvement in the district's current outcomes, with the exception of the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative and tables supplied in the proposal present some evidence for improvement in student achievement over time, but the trends are not consistent for all subjects and all years. The district's strength in this criterion rests in their data system for managing student progress, curriculum, standards, and assessments.</p> <p>Their performance-based system began in 2009 with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class, and was implemented district-wide in 2011. The greatest impact on ELA California State Test scores was seen in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade with a rise from 29% to 41% over four years. Over the past 2 years all grade levels but two posted their highest proficiency rate in ELA since 2005. Math achievement is an area of concern, particularly in high school. Although the percent proficient in Geometry and Algebra II have increased greatly since 2008, the percentage of all math students taking those courses has dramatically decreased while enrollment in Algebra increased substantially. In 2008 43% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders took Algebra I, 30% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders took Geometry, and 27% of grade 11 students took Algebra II. In 2012, those percentages were 66%, 19%, and 15%, respectively. The variability in math scores across grades and over time suggest that the district has not yet established a clear record of success in mathematics achievement. The application acknowledges this area of concern, and it is likely that the district will use its data system and professional development to make improvements in math instruction.</p> <p>Results on the California English Language Development Test show that the district made its Annual Measurable Achievement Objective for the first time since 2007-08. In 2012 all schools met the objectives except the continuation high school, and it was the first year the district met the objectives for students who have been in the U.S. less than 5 years. The percentage of students passing the California High School Exit Exam in ELA increased substantially during 2010-2012 and 2011-2012 over 2005-2006 levels. Growth in math on that exam is not evident, which indicates the district's graduates may not be college and career ready.</p> <p>All district schools are low-performing schools, therefore this record of advancing student achievement applies to all schools.</p> <p>The district has invested heavily in creating a system for storing, managing, and using student achievement data and making progress, curricula, standards, and competencies available for students, parents, and teachers. Training was provided to enable stakeholders to use this data for developing and monitoring individual learning plans. This pre-grant achievement increases the likelihood that student performance data will be used to improve participation, instruction, and services to students and families.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides adequate transparency to its stakeholders through the district website. On that site the public can access personnel salaries and other expenditures at the school level. The grant proposal did not state, however, whether separate figures were available for instructional staff and teachers.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has ideal conditions for implementing its plan. The state of California statutes contain a "permissive education code," which gives school districts and their school boards broad authority and autonomy to carry on programs and expend funds for programs which are necessary to meet its needs and are consistent with purposes for which the funds were appropriated. With the freedom to implement the innovative plans in this proposal, it is highly likely that the district will be successful in carrying out its planned activities.</p> <p>The State Superintendent visited the Lindsay High School, was very impressed by the personalized learning program, and sent a letter that the Department of Education was proud of this innovative district. The Lindsay Unified School District gets calls from the California Department of Education requesting information about their program, which is an indication that the LUSD plan will have support for sustainability and replication beyond the district.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has excellent broad-based support for its proposal. The community was involved from the very beginning (2007) of the program's development. Initially 120 parents, teachers, principals, teacher union representatives, classified employee union representatives, community and business members, as well as partnering organizations helped develop the vision through focus groups and forums conducted in English and Spanish. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators have ongoing involvement in decision-making, evaluation, feedback and refinement. All stakeholders were involved in a needs assessment conducted by doctoral students at California State University.</p> <p>The district's application contains thirty-eight letters of support from teachers, principals from all eight schools, booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, city officials, etc. Most impressive are the letters of support from Dr. Robert Marzano, Associate Dean of Fresno State University School of Education, and a senior research associate from WestEd.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has a high-quality plan for addressing identified needs and gaps. This plan lists the needs already identified and includes a timeline, deliverables and persons responsible. This detailed plan is consistent with the proposal's theory of change model, and it is very likely that the grant plan will succeed in all four areas of the model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refine current practices to ensure personalized mastery learning</li> <li>• provide anytime access to curriculum, assessment, and resources</li> <li>• provide greater capacity to integrate technology in the classroom</li> <li>• integrate a system of assessment for customized mastery learning</li> </ul>		

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Lindsay Unified School District currently meets this criterion exceptionally well, and its grant plan will expand and increase its capacity to personalize mastery learning, assessment, and support tools so that students will meet college and career-ready standards.</p> <p>The plan emphasizes preparing students to be self-directed learners, which is essential to the success of personalized mastery learning. The narrative states that the PBS system ensures that "students are aware of the standards they must learn for high school graduation," and that "they take responsibility for learning them."</p> <p>By employing personalized mastery learning, teachers and students can individualize the students' learning pace, schedule, and goals. Responsibility for learning gradually passes from teacher to student as the student progresses through standards along the path to graduation. Students keep track of their progress and set goals for progress. Teachers supply supporting materials, experiences, and coaching that align with the students' interests, learning styles, and learning needs. Students can also work in multi-aged groups, get peer support, and learn online. The supports and instructional techniques in this plan greatly increase the likelihood that students develop learning and work habits that prepare them for the adult world.</p> <p>The Educate software contains a personal dashboard for students to see where they are relative to graduation requirements and what they have yet to master, along with a timeline. Students can choose to accelerate progress by learning with online resources during the summer and by combining subjects, such as English and History, in meeting a standard. This feature provides students the opportunity to exercise autonomy while developing proficiency, which strengthens self-directedness.</p> <p>The schools use a 4-level rubric to report achievement, with the top score, 4, indicating the student has gone beyond mastery of simple and complex skills and knowledge to apply the knowledge. Students have access to diverse cultures and experiences when taking online or blended courses in which they may work together with students living far from Lindsay.</p>		

Another facet of Lindsay's plan is assessment of Life-Long Learning Standards, which must be mastered to graduate from high school in the district. The LLLS prepare students to be self-directed learners, civic-minded, global citizens, culturally aware, and quality producers and resource managers. These standards help ensure that students can apply their academic success, as they move into adulthood, to lead productive, meaningful lives.

Each student in the district is ensured to have a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development, a variety of high-quality instructional approaches, and a high-quality curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards and College and Career-ready standards. Updated assessment and progress data are available online to the student and family. Accommodations and strategies for high-needs students are available through personalized mastery learning. When all students have what is basically an IEP, special education and other high-needs students may feel less stigmatized and isolated. This could improve their confidence, motivation and achievement.

All students participate in a hands-on workshop to learn how to use Educate and other online resources before they are issued their notebook computer. Training is also available on U-Tube and the district's student portal. This training helps ensure that all students have equal access to resources, regardless of their previous levels of access to technology.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a very high quality plan, including goals, activities, timeline, and responsible parties, for personalized learning to enable all students to graduate college and career-ready. The strong points of the plan include the time devoted to extensive professional development and ongoing coaching for educators, teacher collaborative teams and the services of curriculum specialists. Another strength is availability of software and databases for teachers to monitor student progress and provide learning resources to students. The third strength is in the teacher evaluation system which involves multiple measures of effectiveness and resources for improvement.

The high quality plan includes an ambitious schedule of professional development. Over three years of the grant a total of 25 non-student-contact days will be devoted to professional development. ( A partnership with Fresno State University will develop a residency program to prepare new teachers to work in personalized learning systems.) Topics for teacher training include components of a performance-based system, research-based best practices, effective instructional strategies for student-centered learning, and structures for a learner-centered environment. Recordings of training modules will be available to teachers for later review. Training will benefit from the district's partnership with national experts. Training will be followed up with on-site and virtual coaching.

Teachers will work in collaborative teams to develop assessments and rubrics, engage in cross-grade collaborations to adapt content and instruction, and develop multiple measures for demonstrating mastery. Curriculum specialists will coordinate training and coaching, and teachers on special assignment will assist teachers with developing Level 4 projects for students.

Teachers will monitor student progress using the Educate software and use data to individualize instruction. Educate will be enhanced to align with the Common Core State Standards and College/Career Ready standards.

The district's teacher and principal evaluation systems provide feedback for continuous improvement and are based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. Multiple measures are used to determine performance levels, including classroom observations, portfolios, and student/parent surveys. The Teacher's Association also permits the use of non-norm-referenced student test results to be included in evaluations.

As mentioned above, teachers will be trained in using tools, data, and resources to ensure student progress. The resources include a system for readily accessible student progress data and high quality learning researches, both printed and online. Tools and resources to match student needs with learning resources were also described above.

School leaders and leadership teams will have training that includes using teacher evaluation system to improve the effectiveness of teachers, and training and resources are available to leaders to ensure the closure of student achievement gaps.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Lindsay School District has a high quality plan for implementation by virtue of its well-crafted personalized learning structure and policies which afford schools the flexibility to make adjustments to meet the needs of students.

The District Leadership Team, composed of the District Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendents of Human Resources and Business, and Site Principals and Leadership Directors, provides support, direction, and policy for all schools in the district. Each school site has a School Leadership Team, which includes the Principal, Learning Director, and Lead Teachers. This group implements policies aligned with the district vision. The district's leadership structure was developed with the assistance of a partner from the Marzano Research Labs.

Individual schools have quite a bit of autonomy to make changes to fit their needs. Each school is responsible for developing its own school-level budget, and school principals are empowered to make school personnel decisions, including setting the roles and responsibilities of employees. Schools are free to change their schedules and learning areas to accommodate changing numbers of students who progress from level to level in their personal learning plans during the school year. Class sizes and make-up change frequently.

Policies and procedures enable students to progress through the standards at their own rates as they master them. Student mastery can be assessed in a variety of ways best suited to the needs of the student.

Students with disabilities and English Language Learners have the same access as other students, because the content, geared to various learning styles, is available on the Learner Digital Learning Platform. With the hardware provided by the district to all students, students can access curriculum materials any time, any day, with no cost, via the community-wide wireless internet access.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has excellent infrastructure to support personalized learning with its free access to the Internet and student achievement data. All students and families have access to content, tools and resources, regardless of income, because each student is issued a netbook and there is free access to the Internet throughout the community through an agreement with Verizon. The Lindsey wireless network can be accessed by any internet-capable device.

Technical support is also readily available from partners such as WestEd and Fresno State University for users of the Learner and Facilitator DLP portals. These partners provide one-on-one, small group, and online training and professional development sessions.

As described in an earlier section, parents, students, and teachers can access records of student progress and learning resources through the Learner DLP Portal.

The district's data infrastructure collects, stores, and maintains student data, such as achievement data, demographic information, attendance, discipline, and academic progress. This data can be easily analyzed and communicated to stakeholders. The district's website also posts information, such as budgets, school board meeting minutes, and district policies.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has an excellent plan for its continuous improvement process that promises to effectively analyze and report the grant plan's effectiveness plus enable mid-course corrections. At the school level principals can use readily available data to identify teachers who are having difficulty supporting their students' needs or identify school-wide achievement gaps. The principal can then arrange peer support or professional development for these teachers. In addition, site leadership teams meet weekly, and the director of curriculum and instruction meets with all principals.

The grant application proposes to establish an Evaluation Leadership Team comprised of the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Project Director, District Director of Research and Evaluation, an external evaluator, and representatives from elementary and secondary principals. This team will meet weekly in the first year of the grant and quarterly thereafter. This team will establish a detailed evaluation plan to monitor the effectiveness of implementation

strategies, track progress, communicate results to stakeholders, report on progress measures, and determine the quality of investments.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The grant proposal has a solid plan to communicate broadly with stakeholders and foster engagement. A quarterly newsletter will be published on grant activities, the Evaluation Leadership will report twice a year to the Board of Trustees, the Project Director will report quarterly to a collaborative of community organizations, and updates of grant activities will be posted on school and district websites. During the grant period findings from results of grant activities, stakeholder reports, and brochures will be published, as well as lessons learned, documentation of transition from development to sustainability, and details of refinement processes.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district's achievement measures are ambitious and achievable, even in the context of an impoverished community with low levels of parent education.

The district has selected a variety of measures to gauge progress on six goals, and each goal has multiple measures:

1. Improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals
2. Improve student achievement
3. Increase social-emotional development
4. Improve college and career readiness
5. Increase the use of technology
6. Improve professional development and training

For each goal appropriate quantitative or qualitative measures were selected, for example, the California State Test is used as the measure for Goal 2 at grades 2 and above, the Life Long Learning Standards assessment and the Developmental Assets Survey are used for Goal 3. College and career readiness will be measured by the number of students active at a content level equal to or above their grade level. Increased use of technology will be measured by surveys and logs for both teachers and students. Student performance on the CST is used to measure teacher and principal effectiveness.

The plan describes the rationale for using the measures for each goal, but does not give specific information on how the district will review and improve the measures if they are deemed insufficient to gauge progress. This evaluation of measures is necessary for making continuous improvement.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The grant proposal presents a high-quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments with objectives, activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible. This plan along with the text of the narrative, provides evidence that the district will be able to thoroughly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its grant plan and make adjustments accordingly. Evaluation procedures involve multiple measures, implementation research, and performance feedback. Data will be collected to measure the quality of programs in seven areas of investment: personnel hired for the development phase, professional development, development of the Digital Learning Platform, publications, development of Level 4 and project-based assessments, development of tools and products for replication, and evaluation of continuous improvement.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The project's budget is well presented by project and in total, however one area is unclear. The project's budget does not include any funds from sources other than the RTT-D grant funds. However, the narrative states that, "Project EMPOWER! will be supported by the district's overall budget because it will be implemented at every staff level and at every school, for

every subject. All funding sources will be allocated to every aspect of the program implementation." There is no explanation for whether or not this will occur during the grant period. There are no specifics as to what this district support will be. This leaves questions about the total funds available to be spent on grant activities.

Budget amounts listed in the application are reasonable and sufficient to support development and implementation of the proposal. The budget identifies one-time expenses for personnel, publications, staff development, technology assistance, and evaluation that will end at the end of the grant period. The reforms developed during the grant period will be sustained post-grant through the district budget, Federal Title funds, and some community-based and non-profit agency funds.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Lindsay Unified School District has a solid sustainability plan that will ensure the reforms will continue into the future:

- The focused vision had community-wide involvement for its development, and is part of community culture.
- Many leaders will be developed during the grant period to ensure continued leadership at all levels.
- The district invested heavily at the beginning to build a structure that supports change.
- Long-standing partnerships with many community groups and the development of new ones helps ensure that community support, including financial support, will be ongoing.
- During the project specialists will be hired to accelerate system-wide implementation and build capacity in district employees, who will sustain the program after grant-funded positions end.

The planned sustainability will not only guarantee the project's continuation in the Lindsay district, but will enable the transferability of performance-based learning structures to other districts around the country.

The PBS can be sustained through district funds, Title funds, and Economic Impact Aid, and the district will continue to seek support from local government, other grants, and non-profit organizations.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

LUSD has a very credible high-quality plan, with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties, to partner with a private funding agency to increase the number of graduates who enroll in college. The REAP Foundation selected the Lindsay district to pilot its incentive-based scholarship and college-readiness program because of the district's performance based system. The goals of the REAP foundation are to create a college-going culture in communities with few college graduates, help families navigate the pathway to college-including making a financial plan, and push students to set high standards for themselves and develop leadership skills.

The scholarship awards require students, starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to earn high grades, do well on assessments of standards, take challenging classes, pass the high school exit exam, act as a mentor to other students, and participate in online networking with LUSD graduates who are attending college. Each requirement carries with it a monetary value to apply to the student's scholarship fund, which provides incentive for students to continuously meet challenges while preparing for college. This approach has great potential to be very effective at preparing high-needs, low-income students for college and career.

The 10 population-based desired results are listed by grade level, with six educational results, one social-emotional result, one community result, and two family/community results. They include mastery of core content, passing the high school exit exam, improving life skills, and improving the financial ability to attend college. This data is made available through the high school counselors, and the counselors and REAP counselor will develop a system for tracking post-secondary enrollment of these students.

The REAP foundation will fund the program at a level of \$200,000 for 10 years, with individual scholarships of up to \$45,000, fostering sustainability. The program began with the freshman classes of 2009 and 2010 and will be scaled up to include 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Part of the philosophy of the REAP program is that each learner will do better if all the learners around him or her are doing better. This creates the expectation that as younger students see older students succeeding and earning scholarships for college, they will increase their efforts to succeed, thus increasing the number of involved students over time.

Ten very specific performance measures and goals have been established, such as “There will be an annual increase of 5% in the number of 7-8<sup>th</sup> grade learners scoring at the advanced level in math available on the Learner DLP. Baseline 2012-13.” Each K-8 school has a REAP Coordinator who works with the school Learning Director to monitor student progress.

The program is set up well for integrating education and other services. The high school REAP Counselor works with teachers to provide students with specific interventions, and students and their families are often referred to the LUSD Healthy Start Resource Center where services from 25 local agencies are available.

The full-time REAP administrator/counselor at the high school and the REAP coordinators at each K-8 site increase the capacity of school staff to identify the assets and needs of grade 7-12 students. Because REAP provides services and college scholarships, this partnership provides support for one of the district's key goals: to increase the number of graduates who are college and career-ready.

The partnership plan engages parents to help students set high goals and make firm plans for attending college. In a community where only 38% of adults have a high school education, many residents are immigrants, and parents may not speak English, poverty and lack of education are huge barriers to career and college readiness. Parent-empowerment workshops are required for parents and students participating in REAP. These workshops help parents understand how to navigate through college selection, requirements, and financing, as well as how to help their children focus on the academic preparation needed for college.

Partnering with the REAP Foundation is a natural fit for this district that is built upon personalized learning and serves a population that is nearly all high-needs students. The REAP program makes it much more likely that LUSD students will have - and act on – college aspirations.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Lindsay Unified School District has focused on personalized learning environments since 2007, when it worked with a broad base of stakeholders to define a new vision for the district. The community of Lindsay presents several education roadblocks to student achievement: poverty, low parental levels of education, and a significant population that does not speak English.

Since 2007, the district has invested heavily in developing a coherent system of personalized learning for all students in all schools. Teachers, administrators, and directors have developed curriculum, assessments, and instructional procedures to enable students to work at their best pace in a variety of learning modalities, to master content and pursue deeper learning through their individual realms of interest.

New technology systems were developed to collect and manage curriculum and instruction aligned to the rigorous Common Core and other standards. This system is linked to student progress and achievement data, which is accessible to students, parents, and teachers. Data is used regularly to monitor the progress of the district toward its goals and find areas for improvement. Improvements set out in the grant application will provide teachers with ready access to a wide selection of content and assessment resources, so they can more effectively support their students' personal learning needs. The enhanced data system will also make results data available to all stakeholders and learning materials available to students 24/7, all year.

The district plan will continue to develop the work that has already begun to create personalized learning environments. Ample high-quality professional development, with the assistance of nationally known educational research labs and grant-funded positions, will prepare all educators to complete the work that has begun, so that it can be scaled up and made available to other districts as a comprehensive system for personalized learning.

The district is building systems and using technology to ensure that all students have highly effective teachers. The developing teacher and principal evaluation systems, approved by the Teachers' Association, employ multiple measures, including test scores. The evaluation system serves to judge effectiveness, but more importantly, data is used to personalize professional development. Teachers and principals have full access to this data and are active participants in planning their own professional growth.

Because the student population is primarily Hispanic, and nearly all from low-income families, there are no significant



achievement gaps based on race or income. The greatest gaps are between the total population and the subgroups of English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. An area of especially poor performance, district-wide, is mathematics. This will require specific attention to matching curriculum and instruction to standards and intensive professional development for teachers in mathematics, especially at the lower grades.

The district is devoting resources and pursuing a promising plan to increase graduation rates and prepare students for college and career. Curriculum is aligned not only to the Common Core State Standards, but also to the College and Career Readiness standards. The district has partnered with a foundation to incentivize and provide meaningful supports to students to prepare them for college and provide them ways of earning scholarships through academic success and leadership. This partnership also guides parents in what they need to do to ensure their children enroll in college.

The LUSD plan is comprehensive and details exactly where the district currently stands with respect to its goals, what still needs to be done, how it will be done, and how the plan will be evaluated, improved, and communicated. The proposed plan completely incorporates the four core assurance areas, and this plan makes clear how the district will sustain the programs and resources and share them with other districts.

Total	210	199
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0432CA-3 for Lindsay Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that articulated a clear and credible approach to the goals of improved student achievement and decreased achievement gaps through personalized student support. The LEA convincingly builds on their previous work in the four core educational assurance areas.

- The vision is grounded in research as it is based on the work of Marzano and others with proven track records in school improvement. The vision employs research-based best-practices for increasing student achievement and decreasing subgroup achievement gaps.
- The LEA has restructured to implement a bold, innovative, and meaningful performance-based system (PBS) educational approach, which allows students to master standards at their own pace in a supportive and individualized environment, with a keen focus on college and career readiness.
- Data systems that measure student growth, allow progress monitoring, and inform instruction have been built and will be expanded as an integral component of the project.
- Evaluation of teachers and administrators has been and will continue to be a top priority in order to employ and retain highly effective educators who are committed to the LEA's vision.
- The vision explained that the PBS approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning and will, over time, significantly decrease achievement gaps in student subgroups.
- Through the RTT-D grant, the district hopes to expand their EMPOWER! project to a viral scale, at which time they will share their personalized mastery learning system with others schools and districts.

This thoughtful, focused, and well-articulated vision, supported by research and the community, earned a score at the top of the high range.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented a high-quality implementation plan involving all of the district's schools and students (8 schools and 4,074 students). The proposed plan is strategic, focused, comprehensive, and evidence-based in supporting LEA and school-level implementation of the vision.

- All eight schools met the criteria set forth in the RTT-D eligibility requirements.
- A list of the participating schools and educators, as well as demographic information for each school was presented.
- Each school in the LEA has over 70% of its student body from low-income families and each school serves large populations of high-need and at-risk students. English Learners (EL) comprise 52% of the student population.

This criterion scored at the top of the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's theory of change clearly describes how the plan will improve student-learning outcomes. This high-quality plan is logical, focused, comprehensive, research-based, and supported by stakeholders. The Applicant details an ambitious and achievable plan that promotes the district's vision for improving student outcomes and then scales the vision forward to the next step, which is the development of two PBL digital learning platforms, one for students and one for educators, which would then bring the system to viral scalability. The Personalized Mastery Learning System could then be shared with other schools or districts hoping to individualize standards-based learning, improve overall student achievement, move all students towards college and career readiness, and decrease achievement gaps. Therefore, this project could eventually assist schools across the nation or even internationally in their improvement efforts.

This criterion was scored at the top of the high range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant demonstrated that the Personalized Mastery Learning System is broadly supported, feasible, based on best-practices, engaging for students, and highly likely to result in improved student learning. The Applicant presented very ambitious annual improvement goals for student subgroups and the overall population. Most goals appear achievable, but two subgroup goals seemed slightly unrealistic and adjustments may be needed during the process. These were for EL students in terms of graduation rates (going from 56.4% to a 95% rate in 2016) and college enrollment rates (going from 36.4% to 85% in 2016). While very ambitious, in reality, it may take extended time for this subgroup to reach these goals. The enthusiasm, support, and high expectations for this proposal are commendable; however, this criteria cannot be given a perfect scores due to questions regarding the achievability of some goals in the timeframe provided.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented a record of success in advancing student achievement in several, but not all areas. In the subject area of mathematics, a clear record of success was lacking. Graduation rates and college enrollment rates for the last four years were not presented. However, the Applicant did show a record of success in improving English/language arts scores, decreasing achievement gaps, improving low-achieving schools, and in making student performance data available in ways that inform and improve students' education.

- District-wide implementation of the performance-based system has only been in place since 2011. For the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2009, which was the first grade for implementation of the program, the Applicant presented a clear record of student

success in the areas of English and language arts. In addition, the subgroup of English Learners for this cohort group has shown steady progress in terms of decreased achievement gaps for the last several years.

- The district has identified all of its schools as being low-performing and has made significant reforms in all the schools through implementation of the PBS system.
- Student performance data is being made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services through the districts DLP's.
- In the subject area of math, students overall and individual cohort groups have not shown clear improvements. On the California High School Exit Exam, math percent passing overall was at 70% in 2011-2012, which was the lowest percent passing score in the last four years.
- The last four years of graduation rates and college enrollment rates were not provided. Therefore, it was impossible to assess the district's track record for improving graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

This criterion scored at the low end of the medium range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant demonstrated evidence that transparency exists in processes, practices, and investments and explained that this high level of transparency will be expanded.

- The district posts the district budget and expenditures on the school's websites.
- The district posts the personnel salary schedule on the district website.
- The district posts information regarding the processes, practices, and educational investments related to the program.
- The district posts student assessment data, curricular reports, and information regarding standards and target objectives.
- The district provides and will continue to provide regular updates to the community regarding their progress toward the PBS project and other initiatives.

This criterion scored in the high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA provided evidence that successful conditions and sufficient autonomy exist under the State's legal, statutory, and regulatory requirement to implement the vision in the proposal.

- Relevant California Education Codes were provided that documented sufficient local autonomy and conditions.
- The State Superintendent of instruction has visited the district and expressed support for their performance-based system initiative.

I have scored this criterion in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented very strong evidence that all stakeholder groups were engaged in the proposal development process and there is overwhelming community and educator support for the project.

- Community forums and focus groups were held to gather input.
- A comprehensive survey-based study was conducted, facilitated by California State University, which had high and positive response rates from stakeholders.
- The LEA has developed a strong working relationship with the local teachers union. Union representatives have been involved throughout the process and are supportive of the project proposal.
- Students, parents, community members, teachers, and administrators have been and will continue to be involved in the feedback, evaluation, and refinement loop for the project.

- Many (39) letters of support for the project are included from parents, teachers, administrators, community members, business and community groups, and collaborative project partners. Several of these letters have multiple signatures, indicating large-group support.

This criterion scored at the top of the high range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented a logical and comprehensive needs and gaps analysis, compete with specific solution strategies designed to meet needs and close gaps.

- The gap analysis was focused on goal areas and outlined specific tasks, solutions, timelines, and responsible parties.
- The plan addresses current gaps and needs, but also builds systems and infrastructure that allows for sustainability of the project after the grant period

Due to the comprehensiveness, specificity, and high-quality of the plan, I have scored this criterion in the high range.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal outlines a high-quality plan that ensures engagement and equity for all students by personalizing the learning environment based on individual needs, interests, and goals. The plan is ambitious, yet achievable and enables all students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to high school graduation and college/career readiness standards. The implemented instructional strategies accelerate student learning through an individualized approach that allows students to move through content and demonstrate mastery of standards at their own pace, rather than at grade or age level. The learning plan for students clearly promotes self-directed life-long learning, as students are expected to take ownership of their learning and accept responsibility for their educational progress, behavior, and contributions.

- A variety of personalized, flexible, and supportive structures are in place allowing students to move ahead in content when they are ready, or receive additional time and/or remediation to master standards, when needed. Students are not expected to stay in step with their grade level peers in terms of content mastery, but move at their own pace. This approach has been shown through research to be especially beneficial for disadvantaged and at-risk students, who in a traditional system, due to time and grade-level constraints, can fall behind their grade level and never get caught up.
- Students are aware of the standards they must master for high school graduation and they are encouraged, with teacher support, to take the lead in goal setting, tracking assessments, and monitoring their progress.
- All students have access to high quality content and teachers employ a variety of personalized instructional delivery methods, for example, online, blended, small group, one-on-one, peer-to-peer, and project-based learning.
- The teacher's role becomes more of a facilitator, coach, and mentor in this system.
- Data profiling of students allows for personalized recommendations and helps teachers, students, parents ensure that students stay on-track for graduation and for college or career readiness.
- Students have multiple performance-based opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards.
- The curriculum is organized in a Measurement Topic format, which is articulated into a performance level scale from 0 to 4 and replaces letter grades. This scale is accepted by colleges and universities as a method of reporting learner performance. Students and parents receive ongoing feedback regarding the learner's progress on the scale.
- Many important skills are promoted through effective performance-based learning, including teamwork, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.
- All students receive training on the tools and resources provided to them in order to access resources, track progress, and manage their learning.

I have scored this criterion at the top of the high range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This high-quality plan includes a student-centered approach to implementation of personalized learning strategies for all students that enables them to pursue a rigorous course of study towards college and career readiness and graduation requirements. The plan also includes strategies for helping educators continually improve instruction, differentiate instruction, and improve their capacity to support student progress towards graduation and college and career readiness standards. This is an ambitious, yet achievable plan for improving teaching and leading.

- Extensive professional development has been provided and will continue for the instructional staff. Ongoing training, systems, and practices to continuously move the LEA towards its personalized learning goals are included in the plan.
- Electronic tools for managing and analyzing student data have been implemented and will be expanded to include more resources for teachers, students, and parents. Frequent measures of student progress inform instruction and help keep students on track for college and career ready graduation requirements.
- A system of performance evaluations for teachers and administrator is in use that takes into account multiple measures, including classroom observations, portfolios, measures of student achievement, and student/parent surveys.
- Using data from the teacher evaluation system, there is a plan for increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective educators. There is also a plan for ongoing professional development and placement of hard-to-staff subjects and special areas.

This criterion is scored at the top of the high range.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA provides clear and high quality policies, rules, and practices that facilitate personalized learning and promote the shared vision. The LEA has appropriately reorganized and refocused educational priorities, practices, and resources to effectively meet the needs of the project.

- The central office reorganized teams to facilitate collaboration and communication. A District Leadership Team develops and implements policies, supportive practices, and acts as a resource. School Leadership Teams at each site consisting of lead teachers, the principal, and the learning director, lead implementation at the school level.
- Individual School Leadership Teams and principals are given flexibility based on their schools' needs, within the parameters of the district's Strategic Plan, to make school personnel decisions and define roles and responsibilities of educators.
- Students who demonstrate mastery have the opportunity to move forward in content regardless of their grade classification or age. This called for a change in the traditional organization of schooling to now include multi-age classrooms, flexible student groupings, and differentiated instruction based on skill level or content.
- Performance-based assessments are designed to give students multiple opportunities and multiple ways to demonstrate mastery of standards.
- Learning resources provided are fully accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or English learners.

This criterion scores at the top of the high range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant proposed a strong and focused plan for project implementation that supports equitable personalized learning environments for all students. The proposal thoroughly facilitates equitable use of learning resources and training, regardless of income or special need, both in and out of school.

- Students who do not own an internet capable device may check out a district-issued computer or tablet. In addition, through a previous grant, the LEA has been able to work with Verizon Wireless to have the entire community wired for Wi-Fi internet access. All students and parents are now able to connect to the LEA's wireless network.
- Through community partnerships, training and technological support will be available for the Learner and Facilitator DLP portals.
- Parents, students, and educators have access to personalized student information regarding mastery of standards, attendance, assessment results, progress reports, and other information.
- The LEA and schools have documented an interoperable data system.

This criterion scored at the top of the high range.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strategic plan for continuous improvement is rigorous and requires timely and regular feedback. There is a clear plan for monitoring, measuring, revising, and then publicizing information on the quality of investments funding by RTT-D.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal feedback/evaluation/improvement loop is already embedded in the system. In order to focus on continuous improvement, the Site Leadership Teams meet each week, the District Leadership Team meets each week, and the District Director of Curriculum and Instruction meets weekly with all site principals.</li> <li>• An Evaluation Leadership Team will be established through the grant that will be formally responsible for monitoring effectiveness of the implementation of strategies as described in the proposal and tracking of student progress towards achievement measures. This team will meet weekly beginning January 2013.</li> <li>• Reports on progress measures and information on the quality of investments will be shared regularly with all stakeholders in a variety of formats.</li> <li>• Data summits with students, teachers, and stakeholder groups will be held quarterly and will focus on improving the PBS process and implementation.</li> </ul> <p>This criterion is scored at the top of the high range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Effective and timely strategies are presented for the ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This approach supports a high-quality plan with achievable and ambitious strategies and targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PBS development progress and upcoming events will be publicized in quarterly newsletters.</li> <li>• The project director will report on progress and key events at quarterly meetings.</li> <li>• Information about the project will be posted on the district's and schools' websites.</li> <li>• The Learner and Facilitator sites will provide stakeholders anytime/anywhere access to the project's information and resources.</li> <li>• Funds have been requested in the project budget for a contract to formally publish the district's findings, which will include stakeholder reports, brochures, and project overviews. Publications will also describe project revisions and document the transition from development to sustainability.</li> </ul>		

This criterion scored at the top of the high range.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Ambitious yet achievable and sound performance measures are proposed. All performance measures are appropriate and meet the RTT-D requirements including the number of measures and the setting of annual performance targets for students overall and for specific student subgroups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strong rationale for the selection of each performance measure is provided. Separate and appropriate measures were selected for different age or developmental groups of students. Both academic and social/emotional indicators have been selected. For example, in the elementary grades, norm-reference standardized assessments are used as well as students' progress on the district's Life Long Learning Standards.</li> <li>The measures selected will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information regarding implementation success or areas of concern. However, the proposal did not adequately explain how measures will be reviewed and improved over time if found to be insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</li> </ul> <p>This criterion scored at the bottom of the high range.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plans to evaluate the effectiveness of investments were comprehensive, logical, and appropriate. These evaluation plans included a thorough examination of implementation, effectiveness, periodic progress, and the use of data-based decision making for program modification and improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An evaluation management plan was presented that outlined objectives, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of investments.</li> <li>The evaluation management plan included multiple data collection methods, for example, interviews, observations, assessment analysis, and opinion surveys of students, staff, parents, and stakeholder groups.</li> </ul> <p>This criterion was scored in the high range.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed budget identifies supporting funds, provides all required information, is sufficient to support the project, and provides a rationale for priorities. Clear and thoughtful rationales for investments and priorities are included. The budget plan contributes to the high-quality of the overall proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The budget is reasonable and fully encompasses the six main project areas, which are: Personnel, professional development, digital learning platforms, publications, assessments, replication, evaluation and continuous improvement.</li> <li>Investments for each of these six project areas are specifically explained and prioritized. In sum, these investments will provide sufficient support to the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.</li> <li>All supporting budget documentation and tables were provided as required.</li> <li>Resources that will support the project, both one-time and long-term, were listed. However more details were needed regarding funds that might be used outside the grant included project amounts and specific sources.</li> </ul> <p>The application scored in the high range for this criterion.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project. Through thoughtful backwards planning, sustainability was built into the project and was discussed throughout the proposal as a long-term objective, not just in this section of the application.

- The plan explains a five-step process for achieving sustainability: focused vision, effective leadership, effective organizational structure, strong partnerships, and secure funding. Through specific development in each of these areas, the long-term sustainability of the project can be achieved.
- Significant expenditures are for contracts with outside partners and vendors designed to focus on one-time investment in areas such as technology development, performance-based assessments, tools for replication, and a series of professional development training programs.
- With the launch of the two new platforms, the personnel positions of Project Director, Curriculum Specialists, Teachers on Special Assignment, and Internet Resource Specialists, will not be required after the funding period and will be phased out.
- At the end of the grant period, the components of the PBS can be sustained through the LEA's General Fund, Title I, Title II, Title III, and Economic Impact Aid.

The application scored at the top of the high range for this criterion.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presented a strong competitive preference priority that promotes students' academic success, social/emotional health, and college/career readiness through a community partnership. This coherent and sustainable partnership appropriately augments the school's resources and provides a strong academic and behavioral motivator for students.

- The LEA has partnered with the Rural Education for Americans Project (REAP). This partnership provides a "Foundation Scholarship Program" that allows students, beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to earn college funds for meeting certain academic and Life Skills expectations. The REAP Foundation has made a commitment to fund \$200,000 per year for ten years. The program was started in 2010-11 with the freshman class and has been expanded to include more grade levels of students each year. The LEA would like to continue growing the program. Through REAP, students can earn funds for college for achieving certain expectations. For example, students can earn \$500 for their fund for scoring at certain levels on specific assessments.
- The goals of the program are to create a college-going culture in the community, to familiarize families with pathways to college, to help students locate college funding, to develop leadership skills, and to push students to set high academic and behavioral standards.
- High School students participating in the program are required to serve as mentors (tutoring peers or younger students).
- Funds continue to accumulate for each participating student until graduation.
- Students who do not meet at least \$2500 in REAP rewards by graduation forfeit their funds back into their class's fund.
- All eligible students have a chance to apply for "Super Scholarships" for larger scholarship amounts.
- Ten appropriate population-level desired results for participating students were provided that aligned with the LEA's broader proposal. These included both educational results and family/community supports.
- A description of how the data will be tracked and used to target resources in order to improve results for students, and also expand the program over time to include more students, was included.

This criterion received a score at the top of the high range.



Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurances. Creating personalize learning environments that promote student success is the top priority of this proposal.</p> <p>· The LEA has already begun a reform movement by creating a performance-based system that allows for personalized mastery learning of standards-based content. The new and proposed systems promote college and career readiness, improve learning through individualized approaches, use research-based strategies, provide ongoing professional development for educators, and increase the effectiveness of educators. This proposal continues the LEA's efforts towards turning around low-achieving schools through sustainable district-wide systemic and systematic practices. Through the RTT-D grant, the LEA proposes to work with partners to expand and enhance the learner digital learning platform and develop a facilitator digital learning platform that may eventually be shared with other schools and districts.</p> <p>This proposal met Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	197
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